

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 306
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UNCLAS BANGKOK 19067

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: PHICHAIR REMARKS JUNE 29 ON AIT AND ICS

1. FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF EXCERPTS FROM
FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHAIR RATTAKAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 29 IN
WHICH HE RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS ON AIT AND ICS.

2. BEGIN EXCERPTS

REPORTER: WILL THE DOCUMENT BE DRAFTED FOR THE AGREEMENT
TURNING OVER AMERICAN EQUIPMENT TO US BEFORE THE 20TH?

PHICHAIR: THE 20TH OF WHAT MONTH?

REPORTER: JULY 20. WILL THE CEREMONY OF TURNING OVER AND
ACCEPTING EQUIPMENT FROM WHITEHOUSE HAVE TO BE PERFORMED?

PHICHAIR: YES.

REPORTER: WHEN?

PHICHAIR: IT WILL MOST PROBABLY BE VERY SOON.

REPORTER: WHY IS IT THAT YOU LIKE TO MEET IN THE EVENINGS.
IT ALWAYS MAKES ME MISS THE NEWS.

PHICHAIR: THE CEREMONY WILL MOST PROBABLY BE VERY SOON,

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BECAUSE FULL AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE HAS BEEN ALREADY REACHED.

THAI TECHNICIANS AND THE MILITARY ARE EXAMINING THE EQUIPMENT AT PRESENT.

REPORTER: HAS AGREEMENT BEEN REACHED ON AIT YET?

PHICHAI: AS I HAVE ALREADY INFORMED YOU, AND SEVERAL TIMES, AIT IS KEPT HERE IN THAILAND.

REPORTER: IT IS KEPT HERE, BUT DOES IT BELONG TO US? CAN WE USE IT?

PHICHAI: FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE HELD.

REPORTER: DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN'T USE IT AT PRESENT?

THOUGH IT IS IN THAILAND, IT IS NOT CONSIDERED YET AS BELONG TO US.

PHICHAI: IT DOESN'T BELONG TO US YET, BUT IT IS HERE IN THAILAND. NOW, MANY PEOPLE ARE AFRAID THAT THE U.S. WILL TAKE AWAY THAT AMMUNITION, BUT IT IS A FACT THAT NOBODY PAID MUCH, IF ANY INTEREST IN IT FORMERLY. IT IS ONLY DURING THE PAST TWO MONTHS THAT PEOPLE HAVE TURNED TO AND CONCENTRATED ON IT. NOW WE REALIZE TO WHAT EXTENT WE NEED THAT AMMUNITION, WE MUST HOLD NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND INFORM IT, " I WANT THAT AMMUNITION." NEGOTIATIONS WILL DECIDE WHETHER IT WILL CONTINUE REMAINING IN THAILAND, BUT WHETHER WE MUST BUY IT, OR WHETHER IT WILL BE GIVEN US FREE OF CHARGE, DEPENDS ON NEGOTIATIONS. THEREFORE, I WISH TO ASSURE SOME PERSONS WHO FEEL CONCERN THAT THAILAND WILL RUN OUT OF AMMUNITION, THAT THEY NEED NOT WORRY, THAT WE HAVE AMMUNITION.

REPORTER: HAS THE PROBLEM REGARDING THE ICS SYSTEM BEEN OVERCOME?

PHICHAI: IT HAS BEEN OVERCOME SATISFACTORILY. FORMERLY, BEFORE THIS GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE, THERE WAS SOME TALK THAT THE U.S. WOULD SELL IT. BUT AFTER NEGOTIATIONS WERE HELD AS GOOD FRIENDS, AGREEMENT WAS REACHED FOR IT TO BE TURNED OVER TO US.

REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT THE REQUEST THE U.S. MADE TO US, THE REQUEST FOR A SITE FOR REFUELLING ITS PLANES? HAVE WE AGREED TO THAT REQUEST?

PHICHAI: THE REFUELLING OF PLANES IS SOMETHING VERY ORDINARY. AS I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE, SHOULD IT BE NECESSARY FOR WARPLANES TO BE REFUELLED, OR SHOULD THERE BE ANY EMERGENCY, IT IS THE CUSTOM OR TRADITION FOR EVERY COUNTRY TO REQUEST PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY TO USE A BASE FOR REFUELLING OR FOR AN EMERGENCY LANDING.

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REPORTER: DOES THAT MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE A PROJECT, WHICH GIVES SPECIAL RIGHTS?

PHICHAI: NOT AT ALL. AMERICA IS A TRUE FRIEND OF OURS, THEREFORE NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER WILL BE FACED.

REPORTER: ANY AND EVERY COUNTRY CAN DELIBERATELY CREATE EMERGENCY CONDITIONS. BUT IN NORMAL CONDITIONS...

PHICHAI: WHAT I MEAN IS IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, NOT IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION. FOR INSTANCE, AN EMERGENCY MIGHT OCCUR,

SUCH AS A WARPLANE BEING COMPELLED TO LAND IN ORDER TO INFLATE THE TIRE OF A PLANE, OR FOR REPAIRS TO THE PLANE. IN SUCH CAES, THERE MIGHT BE NOT SUFFICIENT TIME TO APPLY FOR PERMISSION FROM THE DEFENSE MINISTER.

REPORTER: FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT KHOMAN COMPARED YOU TO A TIGHT-ROPE WALKER. ARE YOU CROSSING AN ABYSS?

PHICHAI: I DEEPLY RESPECT FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT KHOMAN, SO PLEASE AVOID ANY QUESTION FOR ME TO COMMENT ON HIM OR ANY STATEMENT HE MADE. END FTEXT.
WHITEHOUSE

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